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THE RABBIT.

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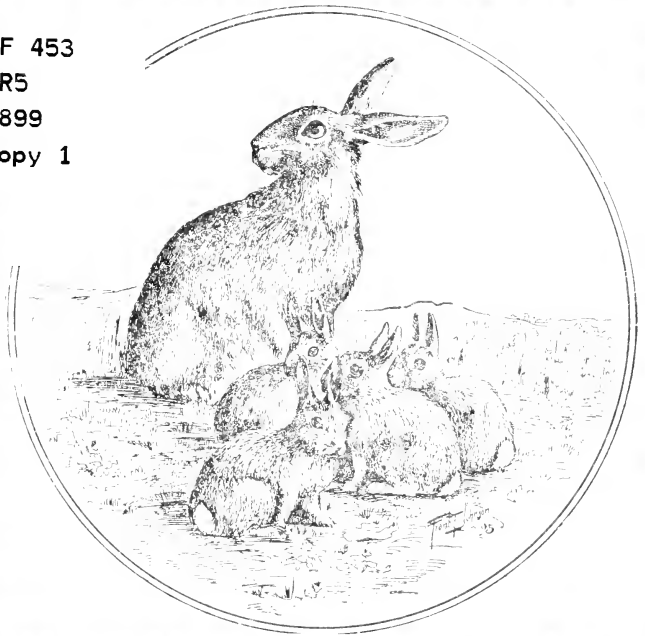
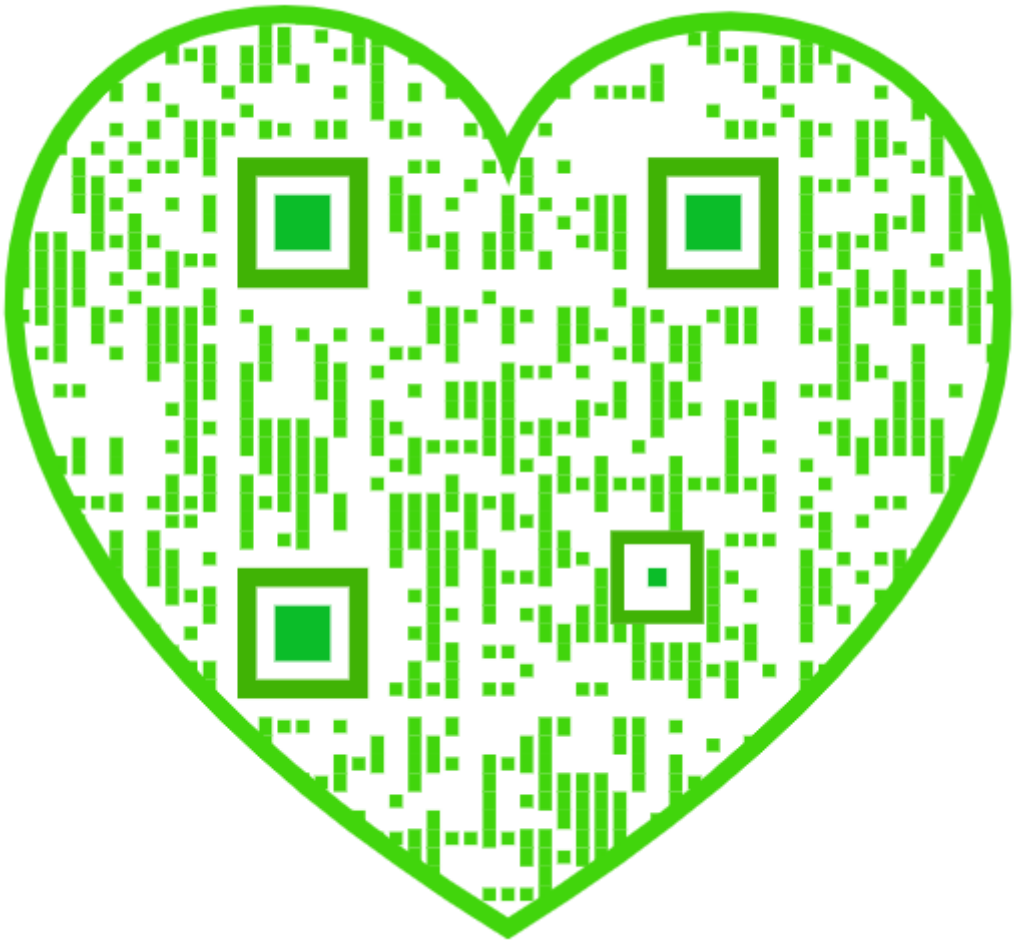


HOW TO SELECT, BREED AND MANAGE THE RABBIT FOR PLEASURE OR PROFIT.

BY
W. N. RICHARDSON

CLARENCE C. DE PUY, PUBLISHER.
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

THIRD EDITION. PRICE 25 CENTS.



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Excel the Flemish Giants as meat producers.

Breeders and Young Stock for sale.

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Young stock of our strain have weighed over 1 pound when two weeks old, 2½ pounds when five weeks old and 5½ pounds when nine weeks old.

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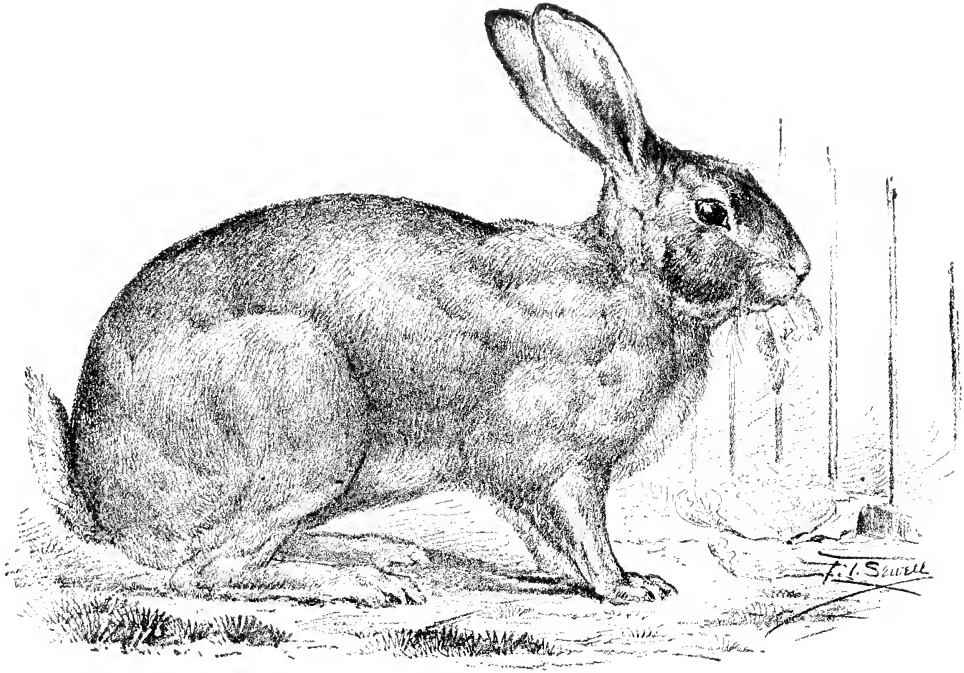

BELGIAN HARE BUCK "BUSINESS"

Owned by LEMUEL RICHARDS, Troy, N. Y., Receiving the Highest Award for Belgian Hares Exhibited at the WORLD'S FAIR, 1893.

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INTRODUCTION.

The demand for a hand book on the Rabbit, explaining in practical manner the mysteries of rabbit culture, treating especially on the care and management of the Belgian Hare, is the only excuse for perpetuating this volume on an indulgent public.

In the main the writer's actual experience is given; while for information requiring greater experience and familiarity with the Rabbit, such eminent authorities as Messrs, Watmough, Mason and Knight, of the land of fanciers, "England," are quoted.

If, by following the plans recommended, the privations and sufferings of an animal so noble, so worthy of good care and attention, are lessoned, the knowledge of their increased comfort, will amply repay the trouble involved, and the mission undertaken will be crowned with success. Read this book carefully, follow the directions plainly given, and the result cannot be otherwise than successful.

THE AUTHOR.

RABBITS FOR PROFIT.

Most people in this country think that the rabbit is a useless pet, and being unacquainted with their habits and possibilities, condemn them, as unworthy of the care and attention they so justly deserve.

The Rabbit question has its bright side. The formerly neglected rabbit is now furnishing both pleasure and profit when managed intelligently.

I find that nine of ten fanciers who give up, do so because they cannot keep their pets in proper health. There is a great deal in feeding, housing and mating.

The conclusion is, that, fanciers spend too much money in feeding their Rabbits giving them too much to eat and the consequence is that they either become diseased or there is a tremendous waste of food. As a rule they are kept in too small quarters, thereby generating disease for want of pure air, I am pleased to say that many men in the fancy have seen their mistakes and are now making the Rabbit a success financially.

There are Rabbits of all colors, sizes and conditions from which to select an ideal, which must possess many good qualities among which must be, a good appearance, large size, prolificacy, and hardiness, they must mature quickly, be exempt from disease and vermin, finally furnishing a delicacy for the table at a cost not exceeding their more popular rivals, Poultry.

THE RABBITRY.

One great essential to success is proper quarters for the stock, this building is called the rabbitry and is as easily constructed as an ordinary hennery and for number of occupants to be considered at a much less expense, the model Rabbitry will afford protection from moisture and storm, space for exercise and separation of the breeders, and all important will be ventilation, for when during the warm months sickness will sure to follow any lack of pure fresh air, plenty of windows, wide open, a large ventilator through the roof all tend to keep the place cool and free from unpleasant odors, secure a tight roof and a dry floor preferably of cement; bricks absorb too much moisture and render the rabbitry very damp in cold weather, a good board floor is quite acceptable if cement is not to be had, regarding the hutches there can be no mistake that the larger the better.

A breeding hutch should be not less than six feet long, two feet wide, and twenty inches high, partitioning off about twenty inches of one end for a nesting room, this apartment should be dark, with an entrance six inches wide at the front and extending from the bottom to the top of the hutch, thereby ventilating the apartment. A door eight or ten inches wide of the same height furnished with a suitable catch for the front, so as to admit a white wash brush easily. The front of the remaining forty inches should have a door of one inch mesh wire netting, fastened to a frame work of seven-eights by two inch wood, this door to be hinged at the end farthest away from the nesting apartment, the one inch mesh netting keeps in the young rabbits and keeps out *old rats*. If the partition between the living and nesting apartments is made so as to be easily taken out the hutch can be used by the growing brood until large enough to separate,

always put the netting on the inside of the frame for often bunny will enjoy nibbling at the soft wood generally used. I sometimes put a small piece of wood in the hutch for them to wear down their teeth by gnawing upon it. A brood buck will be perfectly happy in a hutch five feet long and of course needs no nesting apartment. The hutches are best built two feet from the floor leaving that space for growing stock to run about in, for if you want those long racy specimens the standard demands they must have *exercise* and plenty of room to grow.

The food and water dishes must be securely fastened in place or the contents will be upset and wasted.

FEEDING.

What will a Rabbit eat? It would be easier to name what they would not eat. Hay, oats, corn, wheat, peas, barley, and in fact anything that a cow or sheep will, cabbage, beets, turnips, carrots, dandelion, milkweed, plaintain are a few deilcacies, dry bread and milk, corn bread, boiled potatoes, raw onions, pea pods, green corn, and fresh cut clover for a desert. What else? every vegetable known to man except poison ivy or wild parsnip. The only thing required is a little judgment in the supply and the variety will be very acceptable.

Always have a supply of good clean hay and oats before them, give green stuff once or twice a day and only in quantities that will be eaten clean, in the summer large quantities of green food can be fed, our pets are delightee with the *fresh* cool succulent plants and the grain bill correspondingly decreases, a little care is needed to change from a dry grain diet to green food. The young juicy stuff freshly gathered has, on grain fed animals, a tendency to scour

them, but after they become accustomed to the diet they can be supplied liberally. In giving green food to youngsters care should be especially exercised.

Always bear in mind that the fresher the better. Trouble is caused by wet stuff being allowed to lie in a heap, thereby steaming and sweating until unfit for use, at the same time avoid wet green food if fresh and dry food is procurable, remember that a heap of green stuff in the hutch to be trodden upon and covered with filth, is to my idea an unpardonable condition of affairs and is often the cause of serious trouble. Does nursing should have as much as they can eat, green corn, carrots, fresh clover, etc., are excellent milk producers and should be fed in conjunction with sound whole oats, give cool fresh water twice a day keeping it always before them.

WATER FOR RABBITS.

It is pleasing to know that there is no greater advocate than myself in favor of giving rabbits water as a beverage. I was taught that water was to be used only as a remedy for diarrhœa, and, until recently employed it only as such; but seeing my pets drink their own urine, I concluded they were thirsty and desired a drink of water. Think of the numbers of rabbits that are confined in generally too small quarters that have to suffer through the hot summer months and the feverish hours attendant upon giving birth to their young, deprived of the costless yet essential requisite, "*a drink of water.*" To the adherents of the no water system, I would advise the reading of this clipping concerning the rabbit pest in Australia and how their extinction is conducted.

"In all but the remote sections, the rabbits are fairly under control. Millions of rabbits have been killed by fenc-

ing in the water holes and dams during the dry season, whereby they die of thirst, and they lie in piles against the obstructions they so frantically and vainly strive to climb." —[*Mr. S. Dickinson, in Station Life Australia.*

This, I think, should convince the most skeptical that water is beneficial, if not indispensable to a rabbit, particularly when in captivity and deprived of their natural juicy food. I will state that since adopting the water plan I have not had a sick rabbit in my rabbitry.

MATING.

Judicious mating is an essential to success in rearing any stock. Injudicious crossings are often resorted to, which result in no benefit.

The most common crosses met with are the Lop, the Flemish and the Patagonian; each cross showing distinctively its ancestors. The Lop is distinguished by its soft, pendulous ears; the Flemish by its grey color and large dewlap; while the Patagonian gives a rough coat and ears that are slung most anyway from the proper position. These crosses all give excessive weight and are employed for that purpose when breeding for market purposes. In mating, whatever is done, we ought to bear in mind that we are not making a variety, but are trying to excel in the quality of a specimen of a present variety.

When we have excellent specimens from the best blood procurable, we should use our own stock for mating, utilizing the best of each litter, gradually building up a strain fit to win in any company. Having a type in our mind, and mating for that type, we can quickly succeed in securing an ideal for the market or for exhibition. Many fanciers erroneously place all their confidence in the buck. The breeder

who insists on a good doe with a good buck is the winner. Rather a good doe than buck when only one is available; so go in for a good doe, and when you have her do not breed her to death, nor underfeed her when with a litter of young. The greatest difficulty is in the selection of colors. Other properties being equal in male and female, you must strike a balance—you must take light and the dark. Don't mate two of the same shade unless they have a certain qualification you do not otherwise possess. Try and mate one deficient with one fully developed in that deficiency; that is striking a balance; always taking care not to lose what has been obtained by previous matings.

BREEDING.

For those who breed for profit there are two courses open —one is to keep all the stock until fit for exhibition, or for sale at fancy figures; the other is to market at from four to six months of age. In either case the methods are so similar as to not require any special explanations.

The doe has visited the buck and is placed in the hutch where she is expected to rear her prospected family, which is expected in thirty days from the date of the visit to the buck. She must be supplied with an extra amount of food and green stuff, and a couple of days before the time is up, give an extra quantity of straw or hay to build her nest with; leave no loose dishes or other articles in the hutch, for she may utilize them when building.

It should be observed that during the whole period of pregnancy the doe should be kept as quiet as possible. Be sure and have a supply of water in the hutch at the time of kindling; this is very important and no doubt it prevents many does from destroying their young as soon as born.

At this time there seems to be an unusual thirst, and in their frenzy they destroy their young to appease their inordinate thirst. Confirmed killers have been completely cured by the observance of this rule. Young does sometimes kill their first litter or neglect them, but this is not liable to occur again; do not condemn them too soon.

Do not molest the nest for two or three days; when, after carefully removing the doe from the hutch, giving her a run on the rabbitry floor, you may examine the young at your leisure, removing any dead or extra youngsters you do not care to raise—five or six are enough. Do not handle them more than is necessary. Give the doe a carrot or some dainty she will eat, after an hour or two replace her in the hutch, and she will be so anxious to nurse that the intrusion is seldom noticed. Feed her as usual, giving an extra quantity of food and green stuff, for the young grow fast and if the doe is not well cared for, she, in turn cannot do justice to her young; and they will have slobbers if not sufficiently nourished.

In two or three weeks the young will be moving about the hutch; from now until weaned is the critical time in their existence. With the food and care recommended they will prosper. When about two months old they should be taken from the doe and allowed to run on the rabbitry floor; the doe being started for another family. In cold weather a nest box is good for the young litter, place it in a corner so in their gambols they are not liable to run against it. A large soap box with the top taken off and a hole five inches square in the end answers very well, In the summer such a nest would cause bad ears from the excessive heat. Feed them hay, whole oats, stale bread, cooked potatoes, etc., a limited supply of green food and fresh water every day; bread and milk, not sloppy, is an excellent food for growing youngsters.

Separate the sexes when taken from the doe, and at four months of age separate the males, as they get quarrelsome and the weaker ones are completely ruined sometimes in their fights. Do not breed a doe under seven months of age, and not over four times a year; by this arrangement she will raise strong, healthy litters until four or five years of age. For breeding purposes an old buck and a young doe beget the largest young.

THE NURSE DOE.

Is often employed in assisting the more valuable varieties to raise all their progeny. The plan followed is simple and effective. A Dutch doe makes the best nurse. They are struck by an inferior buck at the same time as the more valuable doe, so that when the exchange is made the nurse doe's young are all destroyed, and she is given half of the young from the other doe. Exercise the same care in handling. They are wonderful milkers, often rearing larger young than the larger doe.

Help the nursing doe all you can; she is the prime factor of your success, by giving the youngsters a start. Bread and milk is excellent food for her and the young.

KEEP A RECORD.

The general plan of the record is simple in detail and effectual in its results. The great thing in system, which must be vigorously followed or disagreeable mistakes will occur, generally too late for reparation.

I keep a record book of my rabbitry, in which is recorded every incident concerning its occupants. Aside from the entries from time to time of the ordinary *Dr.* and *Cr.*, items

and occurences of unusual importance, I have a record of every animal, its pedigree, matings and its final disposition, and can, at glance, give any information required. The accompanying tabulations are actual copies from my record book in use at the present time.

When a rabbit becomes of an age sufficient for breeding, she is given a number and a name, the number follows consecutively, regardless of sex, and are recorded thus:

No.	Sex.	By Doe.	By Buck.	Born.	Name.	Remarks.
11	Bk.	Imported.	Imported.	Dec. '92	Business.	First World's Fair, Oct. 1893.
13	Doe.	2	7	Mar. '95	Cinch.	Sold October 1, 1893.
18	"	Imported.	Imported.	June '93	Eureka.	....

If a doe, she is placed in a hutch and a card is attached, showing her name and number. The bucks are not recorded unless sold or selected for breeding. When the doe has visited the buck another card is attached to the hutch, which shows the date, number, etc., viz.:

O.

Doe 18.
Buck 20.
Dec. 3, 1893.
Due Jan 3, 1894.

F.

The large letter F. at the bottom of the card is the mating check letter in the Record Book, and by looking at the mating F the comparison is easily made. The record of matings are made thus:

MATINGS.

Letter.	Doe.	Buck.	Date.	Tested.	Due.	Remarks.
E	10	11	Nov. 27	No.	. . .	Sold December 1.
F	18	20	Dec. 3	Dec. 15	Jan. 2	Had nine young, put five to nurse.
G	19	11	Jan. 30	Jan. 30	Feb. 14	Sold February 5, 1894.

The pedigrees are arranged thus:

No. 8. Doe, "Helderberg," Sept. 1892.
Sire, Imported Rufus x dam, Altomant.
She by Big Pete x Donavan doe.
Their parents imported in 1890.

PREPARING FOR EXHIBITION

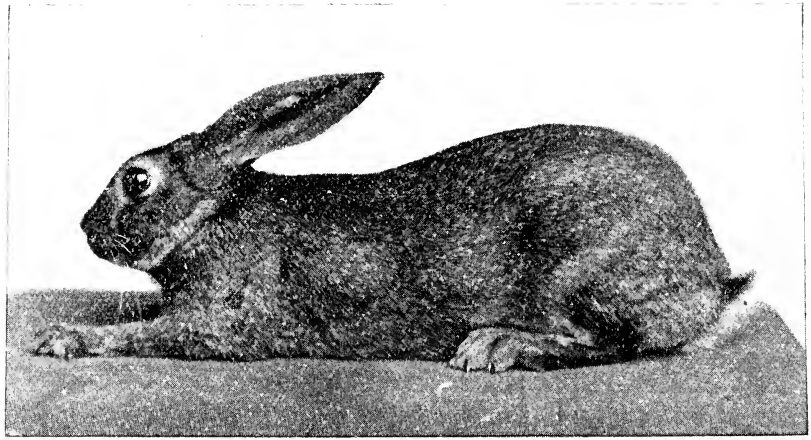
Requires some extra labor, and more exercise for the specimens under preparation. The majority of rabbits are shown too fat; they must be worked down; they must be groomed daily; restrict the green food also; get them in that race-horse shape required in the exhibition specimen.

A buck which has become bunchy, no matter how he excels in other points, cannot enter the show with an equal chance with the long slim built animal. The doe which has become baggy from excessive breeding is also handicapped. Immature specimens should not be shown, as they give the stranger an erroneous impression regarding their size, which is hard to eradicate.

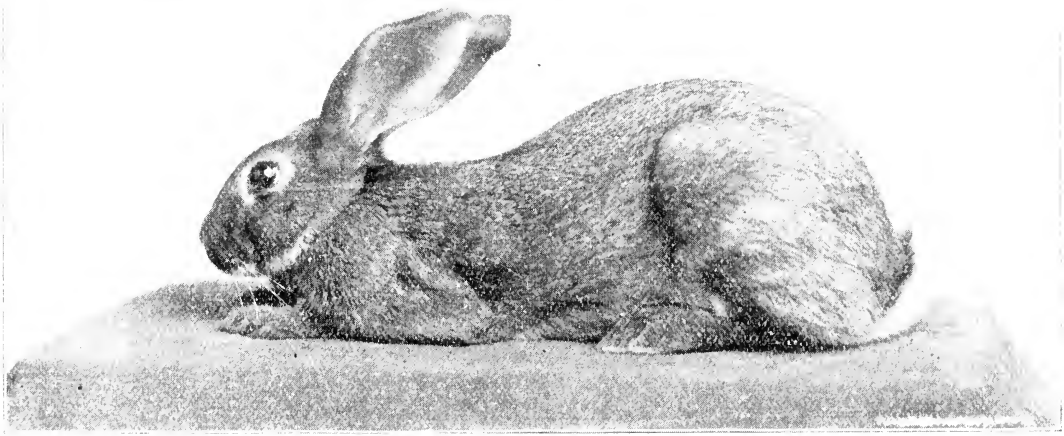
DISEASES OF RABBITS.

Although a list, few are encountered by the American fancier, while the foreign fancier contents with many not enumerated here. Our climate and our abundance of everything that a rabbit will eat together with our American fashion of not allowing ourselves to be tied down to the lines drawn by our grandfathers, all tend to make life much more bearable for our furry pets.

When you see your rabbit sitting and moping in a corner, paying no regards to his meals, etc., you may rest assured that it is not in good health, and you should immediately try and find out the reason and apply the remedy.



"GENERAL LEE"
English Standard Belgian Hare Buck.
(Photographed from life.)
Property of THE STEARNS FRUIT RANCH, Canon City, Colo.



"PRINCESS SECOND"
English Standard Belgian Hare Doe.
(Photographed from life)
Property of THE BROOK RANCH, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Let me impress upon your minds that in all cases "Prevention is better than Cure" and if rabbits are kept in condition in well ventilated hutches, dry and warm, supplied with suitable food, they often go through their lives without having a single ill.

The prescribed treatment is founded on actual experience, and it is hoped that this article will enable the fancier to understand the various ills, and apply suitable remedies.

APPETITE, LOSS OF

Is due to various causes, generally a simple cold or its digestive organs may be disordered.

Treatment:—Keep the rabbit warm and give a little stimulant to drink such as mulled ale, or a little sweet wine, tempt with some delicacy such as a piece of carrot, bread and milk, steamed corn, with a few tea leaves mixed in, if in the summer give a little dandelion daily.

BLINDNESS IN THE YOUNG.

Can often be traced to filthy hutches or some projecting nail or wire. When the hutches are neglected the filth develops noxious gases which tend to inflame their eyes often causing total blindness, they appear swollen and often red pimples are to be seen around the lids.

Treatment:—Isolate the rabbit, taking care that the hutch is warm. Bath the eyes with a lotion of ¼ oz. of sulphate of zinc to a pint of water, apply two or three times a day with a soft sponge.

CANKER.

In the ear is a very uncommon disease and one quite difficult to cure, the symptoms are a thick yellow discharge from the inside of the ears and sometimes from eyes also.

Treatment:—Clean out the ear with a small soft sponge fastened to a stick soaked in warm water, wiped dry carefully and wash out with the zinc lotion, twice a day, cleanse the animals bowels with cabbage leaves or small dose of flowers of sulphur in its food.

COLIC.

Is a painful contraction of the bowels due to indigestion or from constipation, the animal is restless and the belly seems to be more or less distended with wind.

Treatment:—Dissolve a Beechams pill in water, say two teaspoonful, give half at a dose once a day until the bowels act freely, feed carefully for a few days, giving little green stuff.

CONSTIPATION.

Is not generally difficult to cure it is caused by an excess of food. The rabbit is seen to mope in the corner of the hutch, and refused to eat, yet seems often very thirsty.

Treatment:—Give the pill solution until the bowels act freely, feed bread and milk or green food being careful not to cause the other extreme.

DIARRHOEA.

The passage of loose watery stools more frequently than is natural constitutes diarrhœa, and may result from several causes such as a chill, excessive heat, a fright or a too liberal supply of green food when unaccustomed to it.

Treatment:—Remove the Rabbit to a dry warm hutch, and take an ordinary nose (for a grown person) of any favorite "cholera cure" add to one teaspoonful twelve or fifteen teaspoonsful of water, mix well, give the effected animal a teaspoonful every three hours until an improvement is

noticeable. Supply with dry oats, bread or clover hay, allow a little milk or water, but no green food until recovery is assured.

An over supply of succulent food to young growing stock is often the cause of

DROPSY.

The belly becomes swollen and hard and for a time does not seem to seriously effect them, but soon they loose their relish for food and if not relieved will gradually pine away and die.

Treatment:—Remove to a large airy hutch where they may have more exercise or let them run on the rabbitry floor, feed them dry bread, oats, cracked peas, hay (not clover), water once a day and occasionally a carrot or turnip, rigidly excluding the green food until health is regained.

EAR GUM.

The ears should be occasionally examined to see if they are free from dirt and wax, when suffering from this trouble they shrink from being handled, as it no doubt is painful for them.

Treatment:—Syringe the ear carefully with warm water and glycerine, care being taken not to inject too forcibly, dry with a soft sponge and apply some simple ointment daily, avoid handling by the ears at all times as heavy specimens are often seriously injured by so doing, causing serious inflammatory conditions so difficult to eradicate.

FITS.

Or convulsions are most commonly met with in young stock and generally can be traced to some irritating cause, such as indigestion or over feeding.

Treatment:—Keep the effected rabbit warm, and dry and give the following pill; Sulphate of iron 1 grain; extract of gentian 2 grains, to make 1 pill. One to be given twice daily. Give plenty of good nourishing food and exercise.

SORE HOCK.

Is generally caused by filthy hutches, dampness and sticks or slivers in their litter, those who use sawdust or machine shavings for litter can easily trace the cause of their troubles, improper feeding will debilitate and lower the vitality necessary to heal the wounds inflicted by their stamping while the damp filth will prove a continuous irritant.

Treatment:—First clean the hutch thoroughly, then white wash, provide a good bed of hay or oat straw, wash the affected parts in warm water, dry thoroughly, apply carbolized vaseline in an aggravated case put on a bandage being sure to sew it on not leaving any ends for the animal to nibble on. Give good wholesome food and water or bread and milk.

INSECTS,

are generally traced to neglect.

Treatment:—Is simply cleanliness and sanitation. Carbolized whitewash is recommended.

MANGE.

Is caused by a parasite which barrows in the skin and is analogous to the itch in man. Sulphur is considered a specific in man, so it must follow the same in the rabbit.

Treatment:—Isolate the rabbit and apply the following ointment: Flowers of Sulphur 1 oz., Lard 4 oz. mix. I have been unusually successful in treating mange in dogs, cats and rabbits, with carbolized vaseline, the animal does not lick it off as they will the sulphur mixture and it is certainly

much easier applied. In every case thoroughly cleanse the hutch containing the affected animal.

PARALYSIS.

This disease generally attacts the hind quarters and renders them quite useless. The cause is generally traced to uncleanliness and damp floors.

Treatment:—Keep the rabbit warm and furnish nutricious food, also remove all filth in the hutch and disinfect thoroughly, give twice a day a pill as follows: Tartrate of iron 20 grains, Quinine 10 grains, extract of gentian 20 grains; mix, make into 10 pills.

RED WATER,

Or as is often called bloody urine, is an affection of the kidneys and has no general symptoms except as stated and if allowed to go on will cause a rapid decline and end fatally.

Treatment:—Care in food, fresh air and a warm even temperature. Give 10 drops of the following twice a day in water, sulphuric ether ½ oz., tinc. gentian ½ oz., tinc. ginger ½ oz.; mix.

SNUFFLES OR INFLUENZA.

In the English breeders hutches, snuffles is almost always present, and is invariably fatal if not promptly attended to, the American fancier is often troubled with the disease but it seldom is as virulent as our foreign friends find it. Just as a man neglects his own person when suffering from a cold, so is the person apt to neglect the rabbits. But a cold is always a matter of concern in a rabbit, and should receive immediate attention. The symptoms of snuffles are sneezing, moist nostrils, which in a few days become thick and filthy, refusal of food and its coat becomes rough and disordered giving every sign of illness and discomfort.

Treatment:—Wash the nose and mouth well with carbolic soap also the fore legs and feet two or three times a day, wipe dry and put an extra quantity of fine hay in the hutch, keep in a cool airy place and feed stimulating foods. Where this course does not effect a cure, the following favorite English prescription is recommended, which must be used in an ordinary vaporizer: Fill the vaporizer about two-thirds full of boiling water into this pour ½ oz. of soluable sanitas oil, 1 teaspoonful of oil of eucalyptus and 10 drops oil of camphor, place the top on and light the lamp underneath. Place the rabbit in a small hutch, covering up with old sacks to prevent the escape of the steam. Insert the spout of the vaporizer into the lower part of the hutch allowing the steam to enter. By this treatment it is intended to have the medicated vapor reach the effected membranes by inhalation. Treat in this manner for ten or fifteen minutes, care being taken that the invalid is not suffocated by the operation, after treatment leave the rabbit in the hutch for a half an hour, then remove as previously advised. It is said that three operations generally effects a cure. In severe cases three drops of eucalyptus and glycerine in equal parts, give in a spoonful of milk for a few days is recommended.

VENT DISEASE,

occurs in does and is traceable to improper pairing. It is very troublesome to cure, but if taken early and attended to patiently a cure is usually effected in a few days.

Treatment:—Isolate the effected rabbit and apply carbolated vaseline twice a day rubbing it well in to the effected parts. Do not mate until entirely cured as the trouble can be spread indefinately by a brood buck.

In conclusion I wish to bring to notice and in almost every case the trouble can be prevented, as has been stated pre-

viously we have reason to be thankful that so few of these diseases are found in this country. But that fact does not secure immunity. We must be cautious in feeding, secure ventilation without draughts, and enforce a rigid regime of cleanliness, if we wish to go through the hot summer months with the health of our pets unimpaired, build up your does weakened from excessive breeding by allowing a rest in summer. You will have just as many rabbits next January, by so doing, and I assure you that you will have fewer dead and stronger living ones.

THE BELGIAN HARE RABBIT.

THE BELGIAN HARE RABBIT is said to have originated in Belgium, where they are now found small in size, but grand in color and markings. They are also found in France, Flanders and Germany in various stages of imperfection. They are called Belgian Hares, simply on account of their resemblance to the hare.

It was for a long time supposed that this valuable rabbit was a cross between the hare and the rabbit. This is not so, and all attempts to produce the hybrid have either resulted in a failure or the production of a sterile mule. The habits of the hare differ so materially from those of the rabbit that the crossing is effected with great difficulty.

The hare is born fully developed with eyes open, and can run about and eat almost immediately; while the rabbit comes into the world blind, naked and helpless, and does not venture from the nest until from two to three weeks of age. The hare nests on the ground, in some sheltered location, never burrowing; while the rabbit always burrows in the wild state and will when in captivity, if allowed.

The Belgian of to-day shows the improvement attainable by judicious and systematic breeding; foremost in importance is their increase size and prolificacy. As the modern Belgian is distinctively a production of the English fancier, the English standard of excellence will be our guide in describing its characteristics as a distinct variety.

To properly describe the Belgian Hare is difficult, especially the color. "Rufus-red" is a redish tan, clear and bright, showing the clearest on the top of the neck and fore shoulders of the animal. The ticking consist of each hair of the animal's coat being tipped with black, which, according to its density and distribution, its value is governed. The more mottled or wavy it appears, the more points are secured. Starting at the shoulders, the collor shades darker back over the back and sides, showing the ticking in its finest markings; the haunches are of a gray shade, but showing a distinct brownish cast, they being usually well marked with a wavy ticking.

The head and ears have a dark shading, but no distinct ticking, it being so evenly distributed as not to be called

ticked. The head is not large in proportion to the body; it is carried well up and graceful. The forehead is flat and very prominent over the eyes, giving them a very prominent appearance. The eyes are bold, round, and of a dark brown color, possessing a wonderfully pleasing and contented expression. The ears, about five inches long, set up firm, close together, and leaning slightly back, having an edging of black over the tips and extending well down the edges. This edging is termed lacing and is characteristic of this variety.

The fore feet and legs are small and delicate, and are kept well under the animal, are well colored and *free from white*.

The belly and the underside of the tail are white, preferably with a brownish cast.

The hind feet and legs are large, stong and powerful; while generally lighter in color than the fore feet, they must show no white on the outside or top; for the slightest white on the face, legs or body of a Belgian Hare is a disqualification.

Shape in the Belgian is, aside from color, the chief attraction in appearance, and it is difficult to secure and maintain. The Belgian should be long and slim in build, long and fine in bone, narrow in front, long and lean in the head—in fact, a rabbit calculated to give the observer the impression of speed. This length characteristic to be accompanied with a corresponding gracefulness and symmetry of form. The angular, gawkey, stumpy, or mule-like forms being decidedly objectionable.

The English standard for weight is about eight pounds, which could, in this more favorable climate be made more, say nine points, with sacrificing other valuable points. Specimens are occasionnally shown weighing from ten to eleven pounds. No objection should be made to this excessive weight; provided, however, their characteristics are

maintained. As a rule the heavy specimens are very faulty in color and form, also often possessing a well developed dew-lap. Coarse, heavy head and ears, bad feet and stumpy forms are too often seen in these elephantine specimens. Belgians should not have a dew-lap and the exhibition specimen is cut five points when possessing such an appendage.

Belgians though not so showy as some of the smaller breeds, by reason of their self color, are noble looking animals, and for domestic use are of greater value than any of their companions. They are hardy, and few are born that will not with ordinary care and attention be reared to maturity. They are unusually prolific, producing from six to ten young at a litter, and will breed from six to eight times a year. They are very docile, much more so than the smaller varieties, and do not consume as much food as is expected for their size.

Of all domestic breeds the flesh of the Belgian tastes the most like the hare and has not the rank flavor so common in the ordinary rabbit. They will live and thrive in woods or warrens, when turned down for breeding at six or eight months old, if some protection be given them from the inclemencies of our seasons.

THE ENGLISH STANDARD FOR THE BELGIAN HARE.

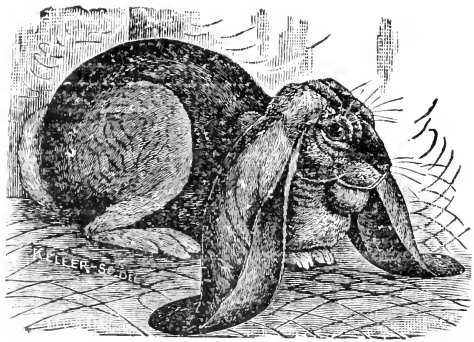
1. *Color*—Rich rufus red (not dark, smudgy color), carried well down sides and hindquarters, and as little white under the jaws as possible..... 20
2. *Ticking*—Rather wavy appearance and plentiful... 15
3. *Shape*—Body, long, thin, well tucked-up flank and well ribbed up; back, slightly arched, loins, well rounded, not choppy; head, rather lengthy; muscular chest; tail, straight, not wry, and altogether of a racy appearance..... 20

4.	*Ears*—About five inches long, thin, well laced on tips and as far down outside edges as possible; good color inside and outside and well set on....	10
5.	*Eyes*—Hazel color, large, round, bright and bold..	10
6.	*Legs and Feet*—Forefeet and legs, long, straight, slender, well colored and free from white bars; hindfeet, as well colored as possible.....	10
7.	*Size*—About eight pounds.....	5
8.	*Condition*—Not fat, but flesh firm like a racehorse, and good quality of fur	5
9.	*Without Dewlap*.....	5
	Total.....	100

BLACK BELGIANS.

Breeders of Belgian Hares frequently are surprised by the advent of one or two Black young one in a litter and often they hasten to destroy the stock as impure, the following article taken from the leading English authority on Belgians will I think clear away the doubt to many:

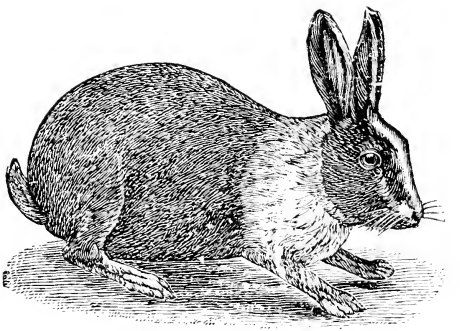
"The value of Black Belgian Hares for stud purposes is very imperfectly understood. As you are aware the old breeders make very successful use of them, as Black is part of the color of a Belgian, at times they are likely to throw a Black, For many reasons they are invaluable, they are useful to mate to does lacking tone and too light in color, they also infuse new vigor in their offspring, they are always the most healthy, the strongest, and the most precocious of the litter. *But why are they black?* In making the belgian a Belgian. black blood was introduced for just the purpose stated, and now that nature having all its force and energy concentrated, the reversion is accounted for.



THE LOP-EARED RABBIT, until recently, was the most popular of the fancy varieties, the peculiar formation of its ears being its chief attraction. They have enormous drooping ears, often measuring twenty-two or more inches from tip to tip and are often over six inches in width, this ear development being of the greatest importance in the breeder's mind. They have not yet become popular in this country, probably on account of requiring so much attention and care, they have become, by years of breeding, a hot-house variety. The hutch must be kept warm and in the cooler months, artificial heat must be supplied. The Lop generally possesses a large dew-lap, which is not an objection, other points over-balancing.

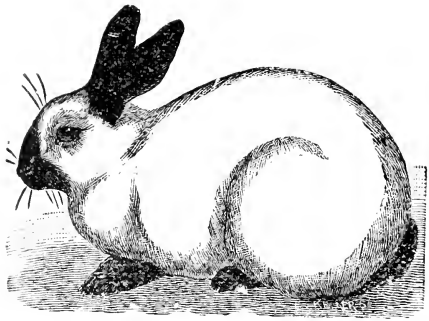
In self colors they are found black, grey, white, blue, fawn and yellow. In broken colors, combinations of white with any of the above, and even a mixture of black, fawn and white, are found making the tortoise shell.

Lops often weigh from sixteen to seventeen pounds, and even eighteen pounds is recorded.



THE DUTCH RABBIT, though much smaller yet none the less popular, is a comparative stranger to this country. They are very pretty and useful; the size is bred down by the exacting fancier, their weight being limited to five or six pounds. Their ears are just the reverse of the Lop, standing erect and being quite short. They are unusually prolific and hardy and will breed eight or ten times a year, raising eight to ten young at a litter. On account of their wonderful milking proclivities they are selected as nurse does where more valuable stock is to be raised. In colors they range over the same as the Lops and have a characteristic marking of white in the shape of a broad band or collar around the body at the shoulders and a white blaze in the face; in the old style this collar being much larger than in the new style which covers only the neck and forward toes.

THE SIBERIAN RABBIT in perfection should resemble both the Himalayan and the Angora, having the Himalayan marking and the Angora's fleece. Most specimens shown are but crosses of the two varieties.

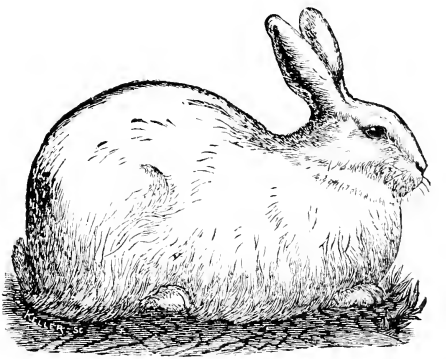


THE HIMALAYAN bids strong for popularity on account of its beautiful markings. The body is white and the fur short and fine, while the ears, nose, feet and tail are dark nut brown, almost black; the eyes are red, the ears are very short and firm. They weigh from five to seven pounds and are extremely hardy and quite prolific.

THE EGYPTIAN RABBIT is a new comer; resembling the Himalayan so closely that the ascertion that they were of no relation was received with doubt. They weigh from eight to ten pounds and are hardy and prolific. The body is white with black ears, nose, feet and tail; it has also a black ring around each eye and a black stripe extending along the back, Where first brought to notice in France, they are said to be a superior article of food, fully equalling any of its competitors.

THE JAPANESE RABBIT appeared simultaneously with the Egyptian and is thought to be allied to the Dutch, though claimed to be a distinct variety. Some shown in Paris, in 1888, were of the true tortoise shell color, which is black, wn and orange—no white, as in Lop or Dutch markings.

The head and ears were beautifully striped, as were the feet, The specimens shown weighed about ten pounds each and were said to compare favorably with the other breeds in hardiness and prolificacy.



THE ANGORA RABBIT is deservedly popular wherever bred; they occupy a distinct place in the fancy as a freak of nature that is at once ornamental and seful. The coat of the Angora is its chief attraction, being composed of long, fine, fleecy wool, making them appear to be of prodigious size, when in reality they are no heavier than larger specimens of the Dutch. The most valuable are the white with pink eyes, although colored ones are frequently selected. They are good breeders and attentive mothers. Especial care must be taken to keep the hutch clean and well supplied with clean hay or straw, and their fleeces kept free from knots and filth.

THE POLISH RABBIT is pure white, thin, pink ears, colorless eyes, and altogether a delicate, timid animal. They are said to have originally been found in Poland; but every

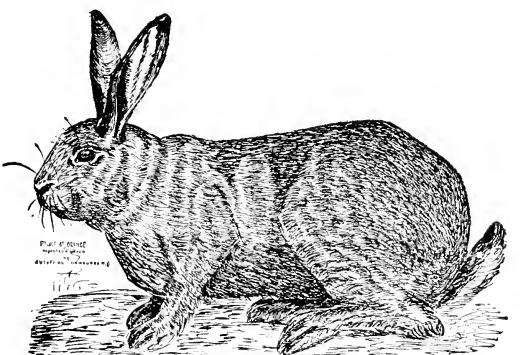
investigation seems to prove that they are but Albinos, inbred until all vitality and hardiness has been bred out. They are indifferent breeders and inattentive mothers, and can only be placed as pets.

THE ENGLISH RABBIT, while comparitively unknown here, is very popular with the English fancier. They are peculiarly marked, reminding one of the coach dog—white with black spots. The most valuable arrangement of spots are one on, or one each side of the nose, a ring around each eye, black ears and tail, black patches along the back and sides gradually increasing in size from the shoulders back over the body; the more symmetrically they are arranged the greater their value. This rabbit is essentially a fancy variety, and compares well with the other varieties for size and prolificacy.

THE SILVER-GRAY RABBIT originally was a near neighbor to the Himalayan, and has become a favorite in Europe and England. They have improved wonderfully in appearance since their introduction. In color they run from a bluish-brown through the slates to a black under color. The ideal rabbit being a dark blue under color and well silvered, with white hairs tipped with black. They are good breeders and are hardy, growing to a good size, often weighing ten pounds at maturity. The Creams and Fawns are off-shoots from the Silver Grays, and are probably bred and sold as such. They share the popularity their ancestors enjoyed and are with them the fanciers' choice in England at present.

THE PATAGONIAN RABBIT is the giant of the species, averaging from fourteen to fifteen pounds. Some authorities claim them to be an off-shoot of the Belgian or the Flemish. Their color is iron-gray, somewhat tawny, and rough coated;

they have large, thick, heavy ears, the tips of which are soft and pendulous, usually they are carried standing out from the head like the letter V. In this variety are found the several styles of lop-ear, namely: half-lop, horn-lop, and oar-lop, which are considered very objectionable.



THE FLEMISH GIANT RABBIT, aside from the Belgian Hare, is the most popular of the large breeds. It is claimed by some that the Flemish is an overgrown Belgian, which by continued selections and breeding has resulted in the present variety. If this be so, they are far removed; for the Flemish is characteristically a distinct variety. One will meet more Belgian-Flemish crosses than pure blood of either variety. The Flemish stands the only rival to the Belgian and is far behind in popularity at present. The Flemish Giant weighs from twelve to fifteen pounds, and in color is a dark steel-gray; ears about six inches long, carried erect. This variety possesses a large dew lap; eyes dark brown; bull dog shoulders, and massive hind quarters; they are fair breeders and are quite prolific and hardy.

THE RAM RABBIT of Spain resembles the Patagonian, with the exception that the Ram possesses a dew-lap.

THE SWAN RABBIT is simular, except the ears, which are about two inches long. These last two varieties have not been accepted by fanciers yet, therefore our knowledge of them is limited.

THE ST. HUBERT RABBIT is the lord of the fancy in France, where it originated; though only recently perfected, it has become very popular as a fancy and as a market rabbit. The French claim all the good qualities of the other varieties are to be found in the St. Hubert. They weigh from twelve to fifteen pounds and resemble the Belgian Hare in shape. In color, the body and ears are silver, the nose and belly white. They have two stripes of white across the back, the ears are laced like the Belgian Hare. The matings necessary to produce the St. Hubert are these:—

Silver buck x Belgian doe=A.
A x Wild Rabbit doe=B.
B x Flemish Giant doe=St. Hubert.

Five or six years of mating and selecting have fixed the characteristics of this variety as a distinc breed.

Last but not least allow me to introduce the DEAD RABBIT.

This genius is found all over the United States, they are easily recognized whenever encountered, immediately upon a hard working fancier securing a success in his fancy these leeches assume all the responsibility and proclaim to the world that it was their stock, (how modest) which won the victory,

they siege upon every occasion to flood the country with the grossest imitations of the genuine article and when brought face to face with their outraged patrons flatly deny any intend to defraud. The Belgian Hare has not escaped these most ravenous of beasts. Care has been taken to exclude all this variety from these pages, hoping the near future will find the Dead Rabbit known only in Ancient History.

Respectfully Yours,

Troy, N. Y. THE AUTHOR.
June 1st, 1896.

THE CARE OF RABBITS.

The rabbit is so common a pet that we believe our readers will be interested in the simplest methods of keeping the little creature healthy and happy. As is well known, but is sometimes forgotten by those who have the care of rabbits, these animals belong to the order of *rodentia* which are gnawing mammals; all of them are herbivorous, and will eat any edible vegetable substance. At the present day, the rodents cover the four quarters of the globe; in geological time, they extend through the "age of mammals."

The teeth. The distinguishing feature of a rodent is his teeth; but to speak only of the rabbit, it should be remembered that he belongs to the second sub order of rodents known as the family *Leporidae*, because of his leaping habits. His teeth differ slightly in form from those of other rodents, the grinders being all alike rootless and mostly tri-laminate, and the incisors less curved and less deep rooted. Between the incisors and the molars is a gap; for no canine teeth are developed in any rodent. Some young animals of the hare tribe have six upper incissors, two of which they shed in later life, retaining a small supplementary pair directly behind the middle pair. This, however, is the exception; there are rarely more than two upper incisors in the rabbit, and never more than two lower ones. The teeth of a rabbit have no limit of growth. They are "long curved tubes of enameled dentine, open at the roots, and, in fact, are

hollow and filled with pulp in most of their extent, only solidifying and hardening in the portion which cuts the gum. . . . The front surface is very heavily enameled, while the opposite side consists of the softer dentine, quite naked, or only coated with the thinnest possible enamel." The whole tooth grows continually, as our fingernails do. The upper and lower teeth should meet exactly, in order to act as whetstones for one another and keep the edges beveled. If, through any accident a tooth grows out of line or is broken off, the poor animal suffers terribly by not being able to prevent the growth of the opposite tooth, which finally becomes an enormous tusk, interferes with his opening his mouth, and even pierces his skull and kills him.

Intelligence. Rabbits are not such stupid animals as many persons think. They are intelligent in providing for themselves and for their little ones. They know their homes, and may be trusted not to wander far away from a hutch that they like, and to respond readily to kindness by becoming very tame. As the rabbit is such a timid, sensitive animal, the very fact of his learning to know and trust any one who is gentle with him proves a higher grade of intelligence than that with which he is generally accredited. The doe rabbit uses her own fur to line a nest for her young, and keeps her home wonderfully clean and tidy.

Origin. Distinct from the family of hares, the original rabbits from which the pet rabbits of our day are descended came from Spain. They measure "about sixteen inches from nose to root of tail, with comparatively short ears and limbs; grayish-brown, the back of the neck rufous, and the upper side of the tail blackish; the under parts white, and and no black space on the ear. The pet rabbits bred by fanciers, however, are all colors. The snowy white with pink eyes are called the Albinos, and are great favorites;

others are silver-gray, pie-bald, or perfectly black. The Angora rabbit has long, fleecy fur. Some breeds are very large, with large ears that fall down in various ways known to rabbit fanciers as the horn-lop, half-lop, oar-lop, and perfect-lop.

The rabbit hutch. An important fact to remember in building a hutch is that the rabbit is a native of a warmer land than ours, and must, therefore, be well sheltered in winter. The hutch should be raised a foot or two from the ground to allow air to pass underneath, the floor should be bored for drainage, and the roof should slope to let the rain run off. A perfectly dark compartment, fully three feet square, should be at one end of the hutch and be bedded with plenty of dry straw or hay—*never* with grass. Rabbits delight to burrow in the hay, and they also like the privacy of their quiet, dark bedroom. A doe cannot bear to be watched while making her nest or caring for her young. When she wishes to attract attention to her babies she will bring them of her own accord to the front of the hutch. When first born, the young are helpless, naked, and blind, and demand their mother's tenderest care. If they are handled while very young, their parents sometimes desert them, and are at all times greatly distressed by the attention. It is best, then, to leave the young rabbits alone until the mother shows you that she considers them old enough to be treated like herself. In cold climates, we should advise placing the hutch indoors in winter. The open part of the hutch should be the feeding-room, and should be large light, and have a wire netting over the front. In summer, the hutch should always stand in a yard or garden. Clean the hutch thoroughly twice a week, and give fresh bedding and plenty of it. When the young rabbits are large enough to scamper around they should have

room for exercise. Remember that they particularly like to bask in the sun for an hour or so in cold weather.

Food. Feed your rabbits as great a variety of vegetable food as possible, and feed them at regular hours, two or three times a day. To prevent them from gnawing the netting across the hutch, or any substance that might break or injure their teeth, keep them supplied with a small log of hickory or of oak. They like young tree twigs and cabbage stalks, carrots and turnips. Under no circumstances must they touch cooked food. Give them potatoes, or turnips, on one day; and apples or carrots the next. Always keep a piece of rock salt in a corner of their feeding compartment. In the summer a great variety of weeds furnish excellen food; dandelions, plaintain leaves, milk thistles, are among the best. The child owners of rabbits often give them too much green food at a time, so that it withers and is injurious; but one may soon learn how much the little creatures can eat, and regulate their diet accordingly.

Water. Rabbits need pure, fresh drinking water. In a wild state, they find most of their food early in the day while it is wet with dew. It is a good plan to dip young shoots and lettuce or cabbage leaves in water to make them fresh and palatable. A flower pot saucer makes a good drinking cup, for it is not easily upset.

By observing these simple directions in the care of rabbits, they will prove charming pets; cleanly, happy, and active in their sheltered life. Free from the agonies of terror caused by neglect and ill-treatment, you will find them far more intelligent and interesting than you can possibly imagine, if you have known them only under the adverse circumstances of their lives.—*Our Animal Friends.*

BELGIAN HARES.

ARTHUR W. KIRK.

Ten years ago the Belgian Hare was practically unknown in the United States, except in a few fanciers hutches, but from that time up to the present period, through their introduction into the show room, by judicious advertising and individual merit, the Belgian Hare has forged ahead of any other breed of rabbit, combining and embracing the good qualities of the other varieties, without inheriting any of their weak points.

As the Belgian has been very ably described elsewhere, together with suggestions for proper food and care, by breeders with years of experience, I will not go over the same ground, but endeavor to give you a few practical illustrations, of what has been done in the last few years, and how satisfactory the results have been, when accompanied by careful attention, and assiduous devotion on part of the breeder. For the production of show Belgians, the regulation hutch 6 ft. long, 2 ft. wide and 20 in. high, is the proper arrangement, while those who desire the production for market, must necessarily lessen the cost and labor required by hutch raised specimens. I have experimented considerably in this line, owing to the fact that the sale of Belgians for breeders, must necessarily depend upon the profit of the production for market purposes. I fenced in

about one acre of mature apple orchard with 2 in. mesh poultry netting, with an additional ½ in. 1½ ft. wide at the botttom, which was sunk 9 in. in the ground to prevent escape or burrowing under. One tree was blown over. I then placed rails around it resting one end on the tree, and piled brush over the whole, thus providing an intricate hiding place.

In this enclosure June 1st, I placed 20 does and 2 bucks, feeding grain once a day, they subsisted on grass and what apples fell. They burrowed and had their young, and the increase to October 1st, 5 months, was 100 developed between 4 and 5 months of age, the percentage would have been much larger had not a heavy rain storm, drowned about 100 in the nests, while cats killed about 25.

The increase however was fair in consideration of the amount of labor connected with it. Where a person can expend a little more labor, for spring, summer and fall use, have a row of tightly built houses, (regulation hutch size) and a door in the farther end to facilitate cleaning. Give each doe a pen and allow her the run of it until time of delivery, giving her freedom of yards immediately after having her young. Provide extra yards for the older young, if they trample over the younger ones, a yard of this size will generally hold from 20 to 25 hares without overcrowding, and the percentage of loss will be much less, then when turned down in the manner previously described. This method, clearly understand, applies only when hares for market are to be produced, show animals must be kept in large roomy hutches and receive the same attention that you would give to a choice "gelding" or "filly" while preparing for the circuit.

A doe if properly handled will produce 50 young in a year, allowing one half of these to be does, that will breed at six

months of age you see the progeny of one doe will reach from 100 to 150 in a year, but of course not of mature rabbits. I generally market my hares at 16 to 18 weeks of age when possible and the usual price has been from 35 to 45 cents each, net in Philadelphia, the cost of these hares when turned down would not exceed 6 cents each, while if raise in large runs about 12 cents and exclusive hutch animals would cost 20 cents each to that age. The one trouble with the amateur breeder is that he expects too much for too little. I claim that if you give your Belgian Hare the same attention you do your horse or cow, clean the hutch as often as you do the stable, feed as regularly, study their habits and there is no reason in the world, why you will not make a successful breeder. I have sent stock into states where rabbits are a pest, with grave misgivings of their successful culture. I have returned, just a few weeks ago, from Southern California, where hundreds of thousands of Jacks are killed annually in the great rabbit drives that California is so famous for, and yet right there in the surpurbs of LosAngeles, I found a man with 100 Belgian Hare breeding does, and unable to fill his orders at good prices. It is manifest when you have something good you can sell it. The last few years rabbit and hare culture has taken a new impetus, the demand for all varieties for show, and fancy has largely increased, while epicures are awakening to the fact that merely a rabbit is not enough, for the Belgian is better. I have repeatedly claimed and still maintain it that a Belgian Hare doe will yield more profit in a year, than a $50.00 cow, with proper care and attention. Establishments are being created for the culture of these little animals that will rival the broiler and squab raising plants of this country.

One significent fact that has made such success possible to Rabbit and Hare culture in this country, is the hearty co-operation of breeders, in improvement and management of the industry, let this continue and we will not have to send to England for our exhibition rabbits, they will get them of us, and let the people once get educated to the to the taste of a properly reared Belgian, and we will produce as many tons as they do in England.

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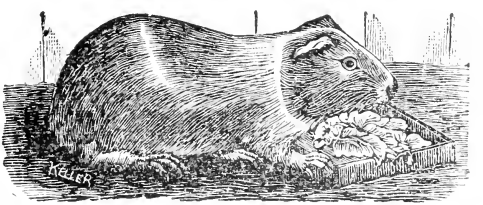

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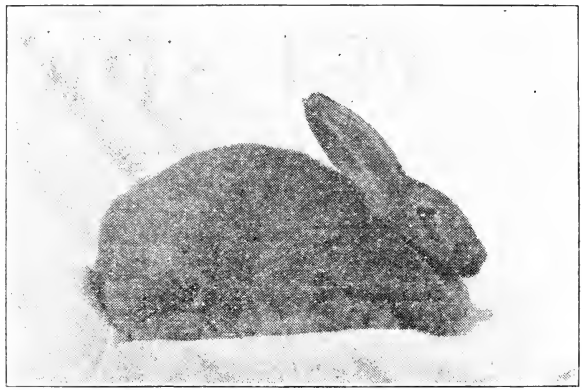

The above cut represents a Flemish Giant Doe which is one of our own importation, bred directly from Crystal Palace prize winners of London. We breed Belgium Giants from the best English and German crosses, also Belgian Hares of the finest quality. Rabbits all extra large size in their own type, and of Standard color. We breed Peruvian, Abyssinian, Angora and English Cavies; in solid black, red, white and mixed colors, some of which are imported from England.

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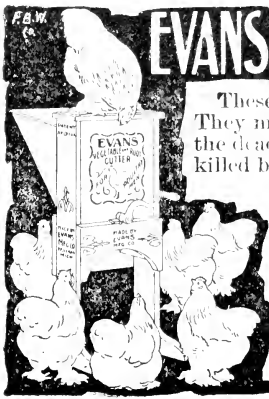

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